

Michigan in Brief

Information about the State of Michigan



Michigan Facts

State Name: Michigan

Name Origin: Derived from the Indian word *Michigama*, meaning great or large lake.

Nickname: The Wolverine State

Statehood: Jan. 26, 1837 (26th)

Capital: Lansing, since 1847; prior to that, Detroit.

State Motto: *Si quaeris peninsulam amoenam circumspice*, which translates, “If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you.”

Population: According to [2012 U.S. Census State Population Estimates](#), the population of Michigan is **9,883,360**, up 6,559 from the 2011 estimate, the state's first increase in estimated population since 2004. Despite this, Michigan dropped to 9th most populous state in the nation, falling behind Georgia. The Michigan cities with more than 100,000 residents are:

1. Detroit, 713,777
2. Grand Rapids, 188,040
3. Warren, 134,056
4. Sterling Heights, 129,699
5. Lansing, 114,297
6. Ann Arbor, 113,934
7. Flint, 102,434

Area:

- Michigan is the 10th largest state in the Union (combined land and water area).
- 58,110 square miles of land
- 1,305 square miles of inland water
- 38,575 square miles of Great Lakes water area
- 3,288 miles of Great Lakes shoreline
- Length: 456 miles
- Width: 386 miles
- Distance from northwest to southeast corner: 456 miles
- 11,037 inland lakes
- Bordering states: Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin, as well as the nation of Canada

Number of Counties: 83

Members in the U.S. Congress: 17

State Senators: 38 **State Representatives:** 110

State Symbols

Flower: Apple Blossom (Joint Resolution 10 of 1897)

Bird: Robin (House Concurrent Resolution 30 of 1931)

Tree: White Pine (Act 7 of 1955)

Stone: Petoskey Stone (Act 89 of 1965)

Gem: Chlorastrolite (Act 56 of 1972)

Fish: Brook Trout (Act 5 of 1988)

Soil: Kalkaska Soil Series (Act 302 of 1990)

Reptile: Painted Turtle (Act 281 of 1995)

Game Mammal: White-tailed Deer (Act 15 of 1997)

Wildflower: Dwarf Lake Iris (Act 454 of 1998)

Fossil: Mastodon (Act 162 of 2002)

Great Seal and Flag

Adopted by the Legislature in 1911, Michigan's flag features the state's Great Seal. Lewis Cass—second governor of the Michigan Territory, from 1813 to 1831—designed the Seal, and it was approved at the 1835 constitutional convention.

The Great Seal depicts Michigan's great animals, with the elk on the left and the moose on the right supporting a shield that reads *Tuebor*, which translates as “I will protect,” referencing Michigan's role as a pioneer state. The interior of the shield shows a sun rising over a lake, calling attention to a man standing on a peninsula. The figure has his right hand raised, symbolizing peace. He holds a rifle in his left hand, meaning that he also stands ready to defend the state and nation. Written below the shield is the inscription, *Si quaeris peninsulam amoenam circumspice*, which translates, “If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you.” Above the shield with the American eagle is the motto of the United States, *E pluribus unum*, which means, “Out of many, one.”

Selected Dates in Michigan History

1622: French explorer Étienne Brulé and his companion Grenoble are probably the first white men to see Lake Superior.

1668: Fathers Jacques Marquette and Claude Dablon establish the first mission at Sault Ste. Marie.

1701: Detroit is founded as Fort Pontchartrain by Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac.

1715: The French establish Fort Michilimackinac at the Straits of Mackinac.

1760: The French surrender Fort Pontchartrain to the British, ending French rule in Detroit.

1763: During the Indian wars in the area, Pontiac, an Ottawa chief, leads a 135-day siege of Detroit. Indians capture all the forts in Michigan, except Detroit.

1787: The (Northwest) Ordinance of 1787 defines the procedure for obtaining statehood in the Northwest Territory, of which Michigan is a part.

1792: Under the British Parliament's Constitutional Act, the first election is held in Michigan.

1796: The British evacuate Detroit and abandon their posts on the Great Lakes.

1805: The Michigan Territory is created, with Detroit designated as the seat of government. William Hull is appointed governor. Fire destroys Detroit.

1812: Detroit and Fort Mackinac are surrendered to the British during the War of 1812.

1813: American forces re-enter Detroit. Lewis Cass is appointed governor of the Michigan Territory.

1819: The Treaty of Saginaw cedes nearly 6 million acres of Indian lands to Michigan settlers. Michigan sends a delegate to Congress.

1828: The Territorial Capitol is built at Detroit for a cost of \$24,500.

1835: The Toledo War ensues over the Michigan-Ohio boundary. Michigan previously was denied admission to the Union because it would not surrender its claim to the Toledo strip. The area eventually is surrendered in exchange for the western section of the Upper Peninsula. The first constitutional convention is held. Stevens T. Mason is inaugurated as governor.

1837: Michigan is admitted to the Union as the 26th state.

1841: The University of Michigan moves from Detroit to Ann Arbor.

1842: Copper mining operations begin near Keweenaw Point.

1844: Iron ore is discovered in the Upper Peninsula at Negaunee.

1847: The Legislature passes a law to locate the state capital in Lansing.

1854: The Republican Party is organized in Jackson.

1855: The ship canal at Sault Ste. Marie opens.

1861-1865: More than 90,000 Michigan men are mustered into service during the Civil War.

1879: The new Capitol is dedicated in Lansing; the structure cost \$1,510,130.

1908: Ford begins manufacturing the Model T.

1910: The first primary election in Michigan is held.

1920: Detroit's WWJ begins commercial broadcasting of regular programs, the first such radio station in the United States.

1930: The Detroit-Windsor Tunnel opens to automobile traffic.

1935: The United Automobile Workers of America is organized in Detroit.

1941: Auto plants are converted for the production of war materials, and Michigan becomes known as the "Arsenal of Democracy."

1957: The five-mile Mackinac Bridge opens Nov. 1.

1959: Berry Gordy Jr. founds Motown Records in Detroit.

1963: Michigan's fourth constitution is ratified at the April election.

1967: Riots erupt in Detroit amid racial tensions.

1974: Gerald R. Ford of Grand Rapids becomes the 38th president of the United States, and the first Michigander to serve as president.

1976: Throwaway bottles are banned by a referendum vote.

1977: The Renaissance Center is dedicated in Detroit.

1980: The Republican National Convention is held in Detroit.

1981: The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum are dedicated in Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids, respectively.

1987: Michigan celebrates 150 years of statehood.

1989: The Michigan Library and Historical center is dedicated.

1992: Michigan State University hosts the third and final presidential debate of the election year. The Capitol is fully restored and rededicated. A constitutional amendment is adopted limiting the number of terms an official can serve as governor or as a federal or state senator or representative.

1998: Chrysler Corporation merges with the German auto company Daimler-Benz, forming DaimlerChrysler. Frank J. Kelly retires, the longest serving attorney general in the country (1962 – 1998).

2001: Detroit celebrates its 300th anniversary.

2002: Jennifer M. Granholm becomes Michigan's first female governor.

2006: Former President Gerald R. Ford dies.

2007: DaimlerChrysler is dissolved when Chrysler is sold to Cerberus Capital Management.

2009: Both GM and Chrysler file for bankruptcy, after substantial emergency loans from the federal government. Both bankruptcies are short-lived, lasting less than a month and a half. Chrysler forms alliance with Fiat.

People

Following the prehistoric inhabitants, Michigan's residents were the tribal groups of Ojibwa, Ottawa and Potawatomi Native Americans. The first Europeans were the French and French-Canadians in the 1600s and early 1700s, followed by the British in the late 1700s. The great waves of immigration into Michigan began in the early 1800s, as New Englanders moved into Michigan's southern counties in large numbers. Attracted to the state's lumber, mining and automobile industries, at least 40 national

and ethnic groups arrived in sizeable numbers during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Dutch, Germans and Poles were among the largest of these later groups. In more recent migrations, many African-Americans and people of Arab, Asian, Near Eastern or Spanish origin have made Michigan their home.

Today's population of 9,883,640 remains a highly centralized one, according to 2010 Census data:

- Thirty-five of the 83 counties have populations of more than 50,000.
- Twenty Michigan counties have more than 100,000 people.
 - These counties are all in the southern Lower Peninsula; Bay County is the northern-most county with more than 100,000 residents.
- Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties alone account for nearly 40 percent of the state's population.
- The 15 counties of the Upper Peninsula comprise just over 3% of the total population at 311,361.

Industry

Three of Michigan's major industries are manufacturing, tourism and agriculture. The total workers in the Michigan labor force number 5,007,456 (2005-2009 American Community Survey estimate).

Manufacturing

Known as the nation's automotive capital, Michigan has a rich history with the Big Three automakers, General Motors Corp., Chrysler LLC and Ford Motor Co., which all began in Michigan in the first quarter of the 20th century. Michigan is home to 23 percent of total U.S. vehicle production (Michigan Manufacturers Association, <http://www.mma-net.org/newsinfo/mfginfo.asp>).

Michigan produced more than half of the office furniture systems made in the United States in 2004, and it ranks fourth in the nation for plastics shipments and number of employees in the plastics industry (Michigan Manufacturers Association, <http://www.mma-net.org/newsinfo/mfginfo.asp>). Michigan also manufactures a wide variety of other products, including fabricated metals, machinery,

food products and chemicals ([National Association of Manufacturers](#)).

Michigan is the fourth-largest high-tech employer in the nation with 568,168 workers in that field. More than 670,000 people are employed in manufacturing jobs, making up 15 percent of Michigan's non-farm employment ([Michigan Manufacturers Association](#)).

More than 330 automotive research and development facilities are housed in Michigan, more than the rest of the U.S. as well as Mexico and Canada combined, and in 2006, Michigan was second among the states for overall industrial R&D spending at \$16.5 billion. As the nation moves toward greener energy policies, Michigan companies are pursuing alternative energy options, including wind and solar power (Michigan Economic Development Corporation, [The Upper Hand](#)).

Tourism

The tourist business is one of Michigan's largest income producers. In 2007, travelers in Michigan spent about \$15.3 billion, generating \$2.4 billion in state and local taxes, and accounting for 148,700 jobs statewide (U.S. Travel Association, [poweroftravel.org](#)). At one time, tourism was primarily a summer season activity, along with several weeks of bird and deer hunting in the fall, but tourism has developed into a yearlong industry. Winter brings skiing, skating, ice fishing, small game hunting and snowmobiling. Spring still means trout and bass fishing and getting the boat ready for summer and its traditional sports.

Among Michigan's best-known tourist and recreation attractions are:

- Arab American National Museum.
- Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.
- Cranbrook Educational Community.
- Detroit's auto plants.
- Detroit Institute of Arts.
- Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum.
- Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village.
- Holland's Tulip Festival and Windmill Island.
- Holocaust Memorial Center.
- Interlochen Center for the Arts.

- Isle Royale National Park.
- Keweenaw National Historic Park.
- Michigan sports teams: the Detroit Lions, the Detroit Pistons, the Detroit Red Wings and the Detroit Tigers.
- Michigan State Parks.
- Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame.
- Pewabic Pottery Museum and Education Center.
- Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.
- Porcupine Mountains.
- Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
- Soo Locks.
- State Capitol.
- Straits area, which features Fort Michilimackinac, the Mackinac Bridge and Mackinac Island.
- Tahquamenon Falls.
- Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.
- Wineries.

Agriculture

In spite of urban expansion into farm acres, the state still has about 56,000 farms totaling just over 10 million acres. Of these, 48,687 are family- or individually-owned, and 2,494 are owned by corporations. The average size farm is 179 acres. (Michigan Agricultural Statistics 2007-2008)

In 2007, Michigan had 582 farms selling organic products, yielding nearly \$32 million in product sales. Total acres used for organic production was just over 50,000. (Census of Agriculture - Organic Agriculture: 2007)

The state ranks first nationally in the production of:

- Three types of dry beans: black, cranberry, and small red.
- Blueberries.
- Tart cherries.
- Pickling cucumbers.
- Flowering hanging baskets, impatiens and geraniums
- Geraniums (seed and cuttings).
- Grapes, Niagara.
- Impatiens.
- Petunias.
- Squash.
- Vegetable type bedding plants.

In 2007 Michigan experienced a record high in cash receipts, totaling \$5.74 billion, up \$1.15 billion or 25

percent from 2006, ranking it 19th in the country. Milk was the leading commodity, accounting for nearly 26% of the state's total. Michigan's top ten commodities for 2007 as ranked by cash receipts were:

- Milk.
- Corn.
- Floriculture and nursery.
- Soybeans.
- Cattle and calves
- Hogs.
- Wheat.
- Blueberries.
- Eggs.
- Sugarbeets

Michigan is also a major producer of Christmas trees. In 2007, 900 Christmas tree farms grew as many as 10 different varieties of tree, generating more than \$29,000,000.

Michigan ranked 7th nationally in milk production in 2007, with 4.5 percent of U.S. production. This was Michigan's highest-ranking agricultural commodity in cash receipts for the year, at \$1.5 billion. The annual average number of milk cows on Michigan farms was 335,000 head, up 15,000 from 2006. The number of operations with milk cows fell to 2,600 from 2,700 in 2006.

Livestock in Michigan at the close of 2007 totaled 1,070,000 cattle, up about 10,000 head from the previous year over; 83,000 sheep and lambs; and 1,030,000 hogs and pigs, ranking 14th in the nation. In 2007, the state's sheep yielded 420,000 pounds of wool, equaling production in 2006. However the value of that production declined by \$38,000, totaling \$151,000. In 2007, the value of poultry production from eggs, turkeys and other chickens was \$239.4 million, up 54 percent from a year earlier.

Government

Michigan's government follows the federal plan of three branches—executive, legislative and judicial. In both the executive and legislative branches, elected state officials are limited in the number of terms they can serve in particular positions.

Executive Branch

The Constitution of 1963 provided that the chief

executive officer, the governor (and lieutenant governor), be elected for four years, and that the executive branch be grouped into no more than 20 administrative departments. The governor's chief responsibility is to enforce state laws and maintain order. The governor submits a suggested legislative program and a proposed budget to the Legislature, and appoints certain officials to various state boards and commissions with the consent of the Senate. Most state employees work under a comprehensive Civil Service plan.

Legislative Branch

Michigan's bicameral legislature consists of a 38-member Senate elected for four-year terms and a 110-member House of Representatives elected for two-year terms. The lieutenant governor acts as president of the Senate; members of the majority party elect the Speaker of the House. The Legislature exercises its law-making function through a system of standing committees and with the assistance of the bipartisan legislative council.

Judicial Branch

The State Supreme Court is Michigan's highest court. It has final jurisdiction over other courts in the state. Immediately below it is the Court of Appeals, established by the Constitution of 1963 as an intermediate appellate court between the Supreme Court and lower courts.

Circuit courts have original jurisdiction over major civil and criminal cases. The state is divided into 57 judicial circuits, each of which consists of from one to four counties. There are 78 probate courts to handle juvenile matters, guardianships, wills and estates. Courts of limited jurisdiction such as the Court of Claims were provided for in the Constitution of 1963. Public Act 154 of 1968 established a district court system that replaced justices of the peace and most municipal courts. There are 105 district courts and four municipal courts ([Michigan Manual 2009-2010](#)).

Resources

Mineral Resources

From 1845 to 1877, Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula mines produced more native copper ore than any other mining area in North America. The quantity of Michigan's native copper was unsurpassed in the world. These easily mined copper deposits have been

greatly exhausted, and Michigan's last copper mine closed in October 1995. Michigan's Lake Superior region has geologic formations containing large concentrations of iron. Most surface iron has been depleted, requiring the use of underground mines. Today, only one company performs the costly extraction of iron from two mines in the Upper Peninsula (The Mitten, April 2005).

Oil and gas fields are found in 64 of Michigan's 83 counties, all located in the Lower Peninsula. More than 50,000 holes have been drilled, resulting in nearly 15,000 oil wells, more than 13,000 natural gas wells, some 3,000 facility wells, and over 20,000 dry holes. Through 2009, more than 1.3 billion barrels of oil and 6.9 trillion cubic feet of gas have been withdrawn from Michigan's rock formations. The wellhead value of Michigan oil and gas production in calendar year 2008 was nearly \$2.1 billion. ([Michigan Oil & Gas Facts 2010, Michigan Oil & Gas Producers Education Foundation](#))

Water Resources

Michigan's water resources provide the state with a mild climate, a ready source of power and transportation, and a growing tourist industry. The state's two peninsulas are almost surrounded by four of the Great Lakes: Huron, Michigan, Erie and Superior. Michigan has 11,037 inland lakes:

- The largest is Houghton Lake, with an area of 31.3 square miles.
- Torch Lake, the second largest, is also the deepest, reaching a 297-foot depth at one point.
- Lake Gogebic is the largest lake in the Upper Peninsula.

Michigan has 36,350 miles of rivers, most of which are not very long. Generally they flow through shallow valleys. In the Lower Peninsula, there are many rapids but only one major waterfall, Ocqueoc Falls. In the Upper Peninsula, where the streams flow over upthrust rocky strata, there are about 150 waterfalls, the largest being Tahquamenon Falls.

The Saginaw River is only 20 miles long, but with its tributaries it is the largest drainage system in the state. The Grand River has the second largest drainage basin and is the longest in actual length. Other important streams include the Muskegon and the AuSable rivers, famed in logging days and now noted

fishing streams. Three short rivers are vital to the economy of the state as they carry goods among the Great Lakes: Detroit River, St. Clair River and St. Mary's River, where the Soo Locks are located.

Forests

About 50 percent of the state's land is covered with 19.3 million acres of forests, of which the most common types are maple-beech, aspen-birch, oak-hickory, elm-ash-soft maple and pine (DNR 2008 Michigan Forest Health Highlights, Michigan State University). Michigan ranks fifth nationally in timberland – forest lands capable of producing commercial timber, which accounts for 18.6 million acres of the state's forest land (USDA Forest Service). Hardwoods make up 72 percent of Michigan's timberland, and maple is the predominant hardwood species. From an economic perspective, forest-related industries, manufacturing, recreation and tourism support 200,000 jobs statewide and contribute about \$12 billion annually to the state's economy. Additionally, forests contribute to Michigan's clean air and water, and limit soil erosion.

Wildlife

The wildlife of Michigan has from the earliest period been a major asset of the state. The fur-bearing animals brought the French and British while the game provided food and clothing for the pioneers. Michigan still has a wealth of big game, small game, fowl and fish. The white-tailed deer and black bear are probably the most common large animals; some moose live on Isle Royale. Cougars, coyotes, bobcats, gray wolves and red foxes are other animals in both peninsulas.

Rabbits and squirrels are the chief small game animals in Michigan. Other small animals include opossum, mink, otter, muskrat, skunk and porcupine. Michigan is home to 434 species of birds (Michigan Bird Records Committee):

- Ruffed grouse or partridge, ring-necked pheasant and sharptail grouse are important game birds.
- Many waterfowl, such as ducks, geese and loons, live in or migrate through Michigan.
- The Jackpine or Kirtland's warbler is Michigan's own bird, as the plains of Oscoda and Crawford counties are its only breeding grounds.

Because of its Great Lakes location and large number of lakes and streams, Michigan has an abundance of fish. Of the approximately 154 species of fish in Michigan, about 30 species are pursued for sport (Fish of Michigan Field Guide). Lake trout and whitefish were important food for early Native Americans. Brook, brown and rainbow trout are popular game fish. After being introduced, coho and chinook salmon rapidly became important game fish.

Education

Michigan's educational system dates back to its first Constitution, which provided for a superintendent to develop a state system of education. That system of primary grades, grammar schools, high schools and state universities continues in Michigan education.

Education is compulsory for Michigan children ages 6 to 16. In fall 2005, there were 1,685,484 pupils enrolled in 575 public elementary and secondary school districts with 105,085 classroom teachers (QED State School Guide, 23rd ed.).

The state university system dates to territorial days when the University of Michigan was chartered in 1817 in Detroit. It was re-established in Ann Arbor in 1837. In 1855, Michigan pioneered in agricultural education when it started a state agricultural college (now Michigan State University). It was the first land-grant college under the Morrill Act.

The state's 15 public, four-year higher education institutions enrolled 287,573 students in fall 2006, while the 28 public community colleges enrolled 215,047 students in fall 2005 (Michigan Manual). Michigan's 56 private colleges reported 119,089 students in fall 2007 (National Center for Education Statistics).

Further Reading

Cleland, Charles E. *Rites of Conquest: The History and Culture of Michigan's Native Americans*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992. **Mich E 78 .M6 C57 1992**

Dunbar, Willis F., and George S. May. *Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State*. 3rd rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995. **Mich F 566 .D84 1995**

Gavrilovich, Peter, and Bill McGraw, eds. *Detroit Almanac: 300 Years of Life in the Motor City*. Detroit: Detroit Free Press, 2000. **Mich F 574 .D4 D4 2000**

Lankton, Larry D. *Cradle to Grave: Life, Work, and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. **Mich HD 9539.C7 U548 1991**

Massie, Larry B. *Michigan Memories: True Stories From Two Peninsulas' Past*. Allegan Forest, MI: Priscilla Press, 1994. **Mich F 566 .M324 1994**

May, George S. *A Most Unique Machine: The Michigan Origin of the American Automobile Industry*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975. **Mich HD 9710 .U53 M434 1975**

Romig, Walter. *Michigan Place Names: The History of the Founding and the Naming of More Than Five Thousand Past and Present Michigan Communities*. Detroit: Wayne State University, 1986. **Mich F 564 .R6 1984**

Sommers, Lawrence M. *Atlas of Michigan*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1977. **Mich G 1410 .A85 1977z**

Weeks, George. *Stewards of the State: The Governors of Michigan*. 2nd rev. ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Historical Society of Michigan, 1991. **Mich F 565 .W43 1991**

Williams, Frederick D. *Michigan Soldiers in the Civil War*. 5th ed. Lansing, MI: Michigan Historical Center, 2002. **Mich Docs E 514 .W5 2002**

Web Sites

MeL, the Michigan eLibrary
mel.org/

Michigan Authors and Illustrators
<http://libraryofmichigan.state.mi.us/Authors/>
Biographies and booklists.

Michigan Facts and History
www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-54463_54466--,00.html
Famous Michiganians, state symbols and more.

Michigan History Magazine

www.michiganhistorymagazine.com

Michigan Legislature

michiganlegislature.org

Office of the Governor

www.michigan.gov/gov

Detroit News – Michigan History

<http://blogs.detroitnews.com/history/>

Detroit News articles on Detroit history.

Seeking Michigan

seekingmichigan.org/

An evolving collection of unique historical information that promotes Michigan's cultural heritage. Brought to you by the Library of Michigan and the Archives of Michigan.

Questions? Contact the Library of Michigan

702 W. Kalamazoo St.

P.O. Box 30007

Lansing, MI 48909-7507

(517) 373-1300

librarian@michigan.gov

www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan